PREFACE

HAITI has fared badly at the hands of its literary interpreters. 114 Condescension and caricature have been called upon, especially in recent years, to provide a short cut to an understanding of the people and their institutions. This has been glaringly true of descriptions of the religious beliefs of the peasantry, the so-called cults of "voodoo" and magic, for here are found the greatest distortion of fact, the most striking misrepresentations, and the largest measure of misplaced emphasis.

The consistency of the tone latterly taken toward this life is all the more remarkable because it is almost entirely absent from the works of the earlier writers on Haiti. For all these observers, the importance of the "voodoo" cult lay in the fact that it was a rallying point for slave revolt, and it was only with the tale of the cannibalistic "Congo bean stew," told by Sir Spencer St. John in 1880, that the accent on the more sensational phases of Haitian religion began to be heard. From his time onward, however, through the works of Froude, Franck, Pritchard, Seabrook, Blair Niles, Craige, Wirkus, and most recently, as in a rondo, back to the distorted version of the "Congo bean stew" given by Loederer, Haitian life has been told as a tale of mysterious forces in their most repellent aspects.

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114 It is interesting to speculate just why the life of the Haitian peasant, and, indeed, within the last decade, of the educated city dwellers, thus became a subject for lurid description. In its most honest manifestation actual misunderstanding or naiveté has undoubtedly been the cause; or it may be inferred that certain of the pictures drawn have been dictated by prejudice or by international political considerations. Finally, and within recent times most frequently, writers have seemed deliberately to distort and sensationalize their materials in order to attract to their work a desired notoriety.

The effect of this constant stress laid on the African cults in describing Haitian life has been not only to throw the entire picture badly out of focus, but to distract attention from the equally interesting phases of Haitian society which concern the everyday life of the people. Almost nowhere, aside from pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century writings, can information be had about the workaday world. The rituals that accompany birth and death, the social and economic values that prevail, characteristic institutions such as the market or co-operative work-groups — one searches in vain for other than cursory mention of these in the later accounts. Even where a writer has included a discussion of such a co-operative organization as the Société Congo on the Isle à Gonave, emphasis is almost exclusively laid on its picturesque ceremonialism. Mention, it is true, is at times made of happy, "childlike" (the favored adjective), normal Haitians in the few pages that recent books have devoted to daytime activities. But with the dusk the "booming drums" are made to sound and the mysteries are again called upon to divert the reader.

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Yet how are these descriptions of a hysterical, paranoid folk, ridden with fear of the dark forces of magic and the anger of vindictive gods, to be reconciled with the picture of the Haitian as he is shown in the second section of this book — of a man going about his affairs in matter-of-fact fashion, tending his crops, buying and selling, carrying on his amorous

conquests, establishing and providing for his family? The 114
answer is that such a reconciliation is unnecessary where reli- 105
gion takes its place beside other interests and activities and 182
where, psychologically, the supernatural world is on the same plane as the natural one, having its dangers as nature presents dangers, but also offering its compensations as do other phases of existence.

Investigations of native life such as this one not only re- 122
quire generous financial support, but have need of the sympathetic understanding of those in a position to extend helpful practical aid and advice in the field. To the many persons and institutions whose co-operation made this study possible, it is a privilege to record here my appreciation. Initial support of the work and later appropriations for preparing the material for publication were had from the Social Science Research Councils of Columbia and Northwestern Universities; while a grant-in-aid from the American Council of Learned Societies permitted the recording of songs in the field; and another from the National Research Council allowed motion pictures of motor behavior to be taken — films from which a number of the accompanying illustrations have been derived. Concepts relating to the problem of the results of contact between peoples possessing different customs, habits, and beliefs — a principle objective in the long-term program of research on Negro cultures of which this work in Haiti constitutes but a part — were sharpened through the discussions I have been privileged to have with my associates on the Committee of Acculturation of the Social Science Research Council, Professors Ralph Linton, Robert Redfield, and Donald Young.

Official aid in Haiti could not have been more generously accorded. The sympathy of His Excellency President Stenio Vincent, and M. Jacques C. Antoine, chief of the presidential secretariat in 1934 and at present Secretary to the Legation

122 of Haiti at Washington, made for co-operation by all those in the government of whom it was necessary to seek assistance. Mr. Norman Armour, then American Minister to Haiti and now Minister to Canada, was kind enough to interest himself in this study and personally saw to it that its prosecution was facilitated in innumerable ways, while Colonel Vogel, U.S.M.C., then Major General commanding the Garde d'Haiti, was helpful at a number of strategic points, as was his successor, General Calixte. Aid and inspiration were derived from many friendly conversations with the two outstanding students of Haitian folk-life, Dr. Price-Mars and Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil. My indebtedness to the works they have published on the subject is shown by the references to their publications given at the end of this volume, for their researches must be accepted as basic by any serious investigator of Haitian customs. Their cordial advice to a fellow-student constitutes one of the most pleasant memories of this field-work, as does the assistance given me by Professor Camille Lherisson, of the Haitian Medical College, and M. Henry G. Sylvain, Engineer of the Service des Travaux Publiques.

080 In the valley of Mirebalais itself, the friendliness of those with whom it was my privilege to associate is agreeable to recollect; if they are not named here individually, it is because of the wish of many of them to remain anonymous. However, to my friends Général Léonard Cantave, his sister, Mme. Vesta Cantave, M. Léonce Joachim, and M. Galbert Constance, I cannot sufficiently express my appreciation for their co-operativeness, for the geniality with which we held long discussions of interest to us all, and for the weight which their endorsement of this work carried with the members of
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123 the community at large. Similarly, and finally, I wish also to record my deep gratitude for the assistance given me by my wife, who not only participated fully in the rigors of field-work, as she has participated in all other field expeditions undertaken in the course of this research program, but

whose contact with the women of the valley made it possible to obtain information of a kind that would be entirely unavailable to a man working alone. In addition, she has given freely of her knowledge while I was engaged in the preparation of this book; it is only the force of circumstances that prevents it being a collaboration, as reports of our earlier field investigations have been.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

South Woodbury, Vermont
14 August 1936

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ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name 175
of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the 162
Mondongues, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* 567
— are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

No final answer can be given about the extent to which 175
these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the 114
unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but 162
such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for 567
Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded 175
by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The 162
Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an 157
ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, 567
their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They [142]
had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

175 562 669 the development of European history the French Revolution sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[30] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[31] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalising hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 114 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympa- 175
thetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little 114 ●
to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the
fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth [567]
century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[illegible]
that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences con-
tinued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the char-
acteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St.
John.[illegible] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself [565]
in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban
society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier preju-
dices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for 175
by 1890 the great estates had been completely broken up, and 178
were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The [423]
dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained
much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis
on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had
been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of
the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[illegible] Markets
which were conducted in African fashion had been estab-
lished, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers.
The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural [595]
marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which
more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early
days of independence. The rites of birth and death were
marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it
can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage
were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal [535]
form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still [771]
persist, were added European styles.[illegible]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. 175
Vodun rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as 178
in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the 771
notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean 789

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that while some react to the supernatural with immediate and overwhelming emotion, and others, though incapable of as deep a response, do sense the mysteries of possession, there are still others who go through life without ever feeling this religious "thrill." In native explanation, it is the former to whom the gods manifest themselves, who become the *ch'wal* of their *loa;* while to the latter the deities never make themselves known. Scientifically, the phenomenon of possession in Negro cultures, at least, is as yet unsatisfactorily explained, largely because of the almost complete absence of adequate reports on the background and incidence of specific cases. Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to its understanding is through a consideration of it in terms of differences in nervous instability, which may be thought of as predisposing different persons to experience the religious thrill in different degrees; or, in other terms, by reference to their differing susceptibility to suggestion. One must reject an hypothesis which attempts to explain the *vodun* cult of Haiti in terms of the neuroses, even when, as in the admirable exposition of Dr. Dorsainvil, the approach neglects neither accepted genetic theory in stressing the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in vodunist family lines, nor the important historical forces which have been operative.[10] For in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, possession is not abnormal, but normal; it is set in its cultural mold as are all other phases of conventional living. That it gives release from psychic tension does not alter the case; neither does the fact that it offers a way to the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, as when the god, speaking through a woman under possession, demands a necklace or bracelet which, though forever the property of the god, will be worn by his devotee. These facts merely emphasize the compensatory character of the phenomenon. The social situation of the individual also enters; some undoubtedly simulate possession for the attention it brings them, while a person who experiences no serious difficulties in the course of his life is perhaps never

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789 called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his gods; 981 is never placed in a situation for which possession would be a release. ● [114] Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

787 794 The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'wal* may become possessed at any dance or *service*, for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *hungans*, present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Taureau, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond*, and may be scolded by the *hungan:* "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" [781] The passion with which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of perspiration rolled down their foreheads. [782] A person who must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

776 777 for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called [114] Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main [782] misleading. Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial 776 784 769 offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as 793 794 776 769 against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the vodun cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil vodun priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from [795] his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This oc[769]curs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the vodun cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* [775] "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

009 754 775 he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[19] it is indisputably a living one. 775 754 266 114 One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> [773] "A *gangan* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading." [20]

775 Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. [776] Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

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APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

One of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian 776
peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment 114
of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their
attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another.
Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement:
Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of
gods, placing them in categories according to their African
derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her
notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told
while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of
"the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some
other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance [121]
in making this study to obtain both names of deities
and as much information concerning these gods as possible,
and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" 776
of vodun as exists has been made available is the great 184
degree of individual variation which confronts the student 794
seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion
are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means [793]
agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists,
each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting
special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and
Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and
[171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also
believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to
live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives
in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The
Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive
Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities,
[782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats"
[822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is
worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom
[114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma-
[248] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color,
something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

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Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmétine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

APPENDIX II

SOME COMMENTS ON METHOD

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THE MATERIAL presented in this book was gathered during the summer of 1934, when an expedition was arranged that made it possible for Mrs. Herskovits and myself to spend a little more than three months in Mirebalais. For so comparatively short a stay, it was particularly advantageous to have two persons carry on the work, each of whom brought to the study of Haitian culture a background of experience with related Negro civilizations in the New World and in West Africa. This enabled the study to begin at a point of considerable familiarity with the underlying sanctions of Haitian institutions.

According to plan, the investigation was concentrated in a restricted region. It therefore follows that unless explicitly stated, all references to custom and belief in this book have bearing only upon the folk of the valley where the study was conducted. No sweeping generalizations for all of Haiti are to be deduced, for regional variations do exist and are of no little importance in suggesting African tribal differences in custom which have been retained because of the African tradition of cultural autonomy for separate localities.

The greatest disadvantage of a short field-study is that the resulting picture of the culture must of necessity be a seasonal one. No first-hand description of the important festivities that

114 121 mark the New Year, the time of harvest, All Saints' Day, or Easter can be given; on the other hand, the accounts of those portions of the agricultural cycle that take place during the rainy season, especially the operations of the important co-operative work-groups, could be followed carefully. In the field of religion, good fortune and a friendly entrée, the harvest of many months spent in field-work among Negro peoples elsewhere, but above all in Guinée — Africa — afforded invitations to a number of private ceremonies that might occur at any season. And the same background, together with the insatiable interest of the Negro in the nature and the functioning of his gods, made for such detailed discussions of native theological concept and philosophical point of view as could not have been bettered no matter what the time of year.

122 124 In the field, the procedure followed in earlier investigations was continued; a house was found in the village where it was possible to settle down and quietly observe life as it drifted past the door. A number of acquaintances became habitual visitors, and these, together with those others whose services as interpreters were needed, especially in the early days of the stay when the understanding of Créole and the ability to converse in it were limited, constituted those to whom questions were most frequently put or to whom happenings that had been observed were referred for clarification. Agreement on all points, or any point, in fact, bearing either on belief or ritual observance was by no means invariably found, but soundness of method in the study of culture must recognize that there are no "correct" answers to questions of custom; and that the acceptance of the fact of individual differences of behavior and point of view within the general framework of a given set of traditions is the only valid approach to the realities of human civilization.

123 124 Obviously, not all the material presented here is the result of first-hand observation, for much insight can be derived from the method of question and answer when carefully used

incident upon culture-change enable the student to observe, under conditions of known historical control, the results of changes in settled habits and belief and behavior? 121

Foremost among the considerations that present themselves in this connection is that of the value of utilizing historical documentation as an aid in the study of culture. This has general relevance, since the obliviousness of students of primitive societies to historical records bearing upon the peoples they study is a commonplace, while no less so is the failure of historians adequately to treat the information they uncover about primitive peoples in the records through which they have worked. In a sense, this is neither surprising nor blameworthy. Each group has its own techniques, so that just as the ethnologist is not competent as an archivist, in like manner the historian finds it difficult both to assess the value of information concerning primitive folk, and to present it so that its greatest usefulness may be realized. 121 127

In studying Haitian culture, however, the employment of both historical and ethnological data is almost mandatory. The serious errors that a lack of both kinds of background has given rise to cannot be overlooked, matters so fundamental as the names of African tribes given the slaves in the early historical sources being an important case in point. Thus, the term *Caplahou*, a geographical one, is given as a tribal designation in a number of modern works, while elsewhere the Ibo are listed as a Nago sub-tribe, quite without realization that the Ibo and Yoruban Nago not only are separated by a considerable distance, but that in their cultural affiliations they differ widely. More striking, and more amusing, is the translation of the word *marasa* given by one popularizer who, lacking knowledge of the existence of the twin cult in Africa, rendered it as "the spirit of the race." 121 127 114

On the other hand, attempts to interpret Haitian culture without reference to historical documentation have also been subject to unfortunate errors. Significant here are the failures 121 127

000 [4] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[114] [5] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[6] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146-8.

[8] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53-6.

[9] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28-9.

[10] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42-5.

CHAPTER V

[852] [845] [1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the new-born infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the vodun priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[844] [608] [2] Craige, 68-9, and Wirkus, 97-9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the marasa [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 135, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 33-6, and Mackenzie, i, 173-4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *plaçage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203-4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 73 and 307.

[771] heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higglety pigglety pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." [776] Price-Mars (I), 32, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craige, 98–9; or 71, where a [114] charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vodou se ramène à l'idée de la possession*," (I), 113.

[12] St. Mery, i, 55.

[13] [788 787] Parsons (I), 169, note 8, speaks of baptism, but states "*loa* Pétrou is one you do not baptise, as you do other *loa* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 163, however, where the meaning of *monté* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 163–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gede-nibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession at a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–18. A definition of *vodun* most acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 130. Price-Mars (I), 105 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

view from that given here.

[illegible] Parsons (I), 171, describes how she witnessed a woman "refuse the visitation of her *loa*."

[illegible] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the "*obligations annuelles de participer par un acte quelconque aux sacrifices culturels* . . ." laid on the vodunist.

[illegible] St. Méry, i, 51; see also Dorsainvil (I), 46.

[illegible] Seabrook's description of a "Pétro" ceremony (pp. 31 ff.) deserves, on the basis of its inner inconsistencies, to be considered a masterpiece of misstatement and misinterpretation. Its effect, and the effect of others like it, have done much to perpetuate this incorrect idea of the Pétro rites.

[illegible] Dorsainvil, Price-Mars, and Parsons all employ these terms, rather than *papaloi* and *mamaloi*, the designations found in more popular books such as those of Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus. The latter two of these writers seem confused about these words and fail to make it clear whether or not they mean the same or different functionaries of the vodun cult when they use the words *houngan* and *papaloi*. 114 787

[illegible] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 75–7 and 121, where he expresses a low opinion of the *houngan*, holding him unreliable and insincere in his worship, as contrasted to the *vrai serviteur*. 793

[illegible] Op. cit., 175–9.

[illegible] Even though followers of the vodun cult are more organized in some parts of Haiti than in Mirebalais, it is arrant nonsense to speak of a "supreme high priestess" of the cult, its *grande mamaloi*, as does Seabrook, 117, or of a "black pope of voodoo" as Wirkus has done (in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 168, pp. 38–49, 188–98; December 1933–January 1934). 114 794

[illegible] A sober statement of the degrees of initiation into the cult (although these do not hold for Mirebalais) is to be found in Dorsainvil (I), 168–9, and also 62. 114 794

CHAPTER IX

[1] Price-Mars (I), 144, gives a long and excellent list of the reasons for offering sacrifices.

[2] A description of a *hounfort* destroyed by the Marines during their occupation, and a detailed account of its

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concerns, is given by Wirkus, 178-9.

- Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

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- It is to be emphasized that in the course of the vodun rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the vodun cult.
- Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 170-3, of a *mangé loa*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 34-70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

- Compare Parsons (I), 167-72.

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- The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.
- Price-Mars (I), 108, gives the name of *assotor* for the great drum.

[illegible]
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- Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers – all non-Haitians – stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.
- This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73-4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vodouique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 120-3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73-4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.
- Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 33, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (92 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

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[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 158–90.

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[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 56. The term *gangan* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *houngan* (*oungan*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a gangan.

[6] Pp. 324–32.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

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[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Auhnen*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 356.

[10] See above, pp. 91–3.

[11] The closest correspondence

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to the Haitian baka found in the New World are the bakru of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[12] Dorsainvil (I), 150, mentions this rite.

[13] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a zombi.

[14] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

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[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 56, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

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[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

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[4] Seabrook, 103 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and vodun by Price-

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Mars (I), 163 ff., and to the briefer discussions of this point in Dorsainvil (I), 33–7, and Parsons (I), *passim*, but especially p. 179. Some consideration is also given to this mingling of religious beliefs in Wirkus, 20, 22, 177, 179, and in Seabrook, 17–20, though in this latter citation the distortion of native belief usually found in Seabrook's book is not absent.

[3] Wirkus, 288–9, describes the baptism of Rada drums, though certain details in his account appear somewhat unlikely.

[4] Compare Parsons (I), 165, 175.

[5] Cf. Ortiz, *passim*.

[6] Cf. Ramos, Ch. V; Ignace; Nina-Rodrigues, *passim*.

[7] Price-Mars (I), 180–1, gives the following correspondences between *vodun*-cult deities and saints of the Church:

Legba:	St. Anthony
Ogun Balandjo:	St. James the Elder
Agomme Tonnerre:	St. John the Baptist
Dagoy Bologuay:	St. Joseph
Roi d'Ambeaza:	St. Louis (King of France)
Grande Mambo Batala:	St. Anne
Maîtresse Erzulie:	the Holy Virgin (especially the Holy Virgin of the Nativity)
La Sirène:	the Assumption
Pierre D'Ambala:	St. Peter

Seabrook, 13, speaks of "Maîtresse Ezilée . . . the mild blessed Virgin Mary," and Wirkus, 178–9, correlates Damballa with St. Patrick, and Legba with St. Peter.

[8] The original of the part of this *oraison* given here is reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 309, and quoted in full by Price-Mars (I), 183–4; the latter also gives, 182–3, another of these *oraisons populaires*, to Ste. Radegonde, who is regarded in it as an associate of Baron Samedi in the cemetery. For *oraisons* used in the fetish cult of Cuba, see Ortiz, 90 ff.

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[9] Price-Mars (I), 32, speaks of "*le catholicisme hybride de nos masses populaires,*" as later, 38, he denominates *vodun* as an African religion "*alterée par sa juxtaposition plus que séculaire à la réligion catholique. . . .*" See also p. 122. The points of resemblance between Catholicism and *vodun* which encouraged the resulting synthesis are tellingly numbered on pp. 164–5.

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The Drum and The Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of years. Several short sections of this book have appeared in substance in 114 *Haiti Singing* (1939), the *Musical Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and other journals. The song and story texts presented in several 126 128 chapters were taken on disc and tape recorders during nine separate field trips to Haiti, between 1937 and 1955. They have been selected from more than six hundred examples recorded by this method.

Support for work on these recorded materials was received from the 122 American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society. Research on African survivals in the New World was aided by a Guggenheim fellowship. Originals or copies of some of the tape and disc 126 recordings are now in the archives of Indiana University and Northwestern University.

The persons who helped me gather songs, stories, legends, and lore 115 were innumerable. Many of them I did not know by name, but I want to thank them as well as the following friends for their open-hearted assistance in many ways:

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I am of course indebted to the work of a number of scholars, cited 127 in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5] 880 346 778 333 776

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago. 114 346 778 [797]

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree. 78

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mou[illegible] human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psych[illegible]enomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the w[illegible] known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the uni[illegible]e property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a meas[illegible]ble extent, but their emotional content has not altered. 787 [797

[5] [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. – Analyst]

[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116. – Analyst]

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the
practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they 776
thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many 184
new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in 792
Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult 794
centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan 783
from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is 114 ●
made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Da- 794
homey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the 177
thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gédés. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a decased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *déssoumé*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *govi* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

> On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papaloi* [houngan] (793)
> conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
> into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the (765)
> dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[§]

Melville Herskovits reported:

> If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps [766]
> are taken . . . , "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under
> the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which [775]
> may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* (793)
> stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[&]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 123
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the hounfor altar there may be some govis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

[§] [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, p. 212
Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

[&] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 213-214
Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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764 775 776 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description 764 776 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> [793] The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *tafia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa à!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.[7]

764 776 793 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

"The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his ason over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the mait' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the mait' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *déssounin*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 766 776 793 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a ceremony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[8] The

[7] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 64, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

[8] [Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire: 996 976 273

Pierre, Pierre Nanime ohé!	Pierre, Pierre Nanime, ohé!
Yago mandé?	Yago mandé?
Caille Ogoun brulé?	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gildive Ogoun bel O!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

[539] [543]

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service: 533 539 976 [198]

Atti Daï ohé!	Atti Daï, ohé!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min solèil malade!*	The sun was sick!
Quand'm vé rivé	When I arrived
Moin jouinl solèil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quand'm vé rivé	When I arrived
Moin jouinl solèil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est tounmant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré solèil! [Ex. 89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Ezilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Ezilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yaguza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another. [199]

Ezilie Naimain ohé!
Ezilie Naimain ohé!
Ezilie oh, c'est moin Yaguza!

Ezilie n'ap marché n'ap coulé n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Ezilie n'ap marché n'ap coulé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Ezilie Naimain ohé!
Ezilie Fréda oh Naimain ohé!
Ezilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yaguza!

Mandamm nà yo chita non caille li yo vlé dpillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mandamm yo passé ya tandé té à gênen y'apé plainnin le mot ya!

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* Some Haitian informants testified that *solèil* meant "son." Others felt that this word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of Atisolé, another name for Atti Daï. [114] [115]

Like their ancestors in preslavery days, the Haitians had a clear-cut and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's fortitude and energy: 462 [114]

> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.*

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children, carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them, and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings of her own.

Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can 857 868

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*[Johnston, The Negro in The New World. Cf P. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

S. Courlander 8-8 (1897-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti 5V3

[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

177 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the
178 loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle
535 for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances
178 they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French-
175 man born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

● 114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

One Study Ob- 114 535

server, commenting upon the dances of the elite and of the peasant declared:

> All the more undisguised is the crude sexuality among the lower classes of the Haitian population. Here every motion is obscene; and I am not at all considering the popular merrymakings or dance festivals secretly held partly in open, partly in forests, which are more like orgies, in which the African savagery, which has outlived centuries, has unbridled expression.[1]^

Whatever the Haitian dance is, it is none of these things. The Haitian himself is neither obscene nor unbridled. His dancing, like his everyday life, is governed by social controls. He would be as surprised and offended by a sexual orgy as most Europeans. But he is not burdened with abstract concepts of chastity. Sex impulses are as fundamental and as taken for granted as rain, drought, and sunlight. The Haitian finds no virtue in living according to standards that have no relation to his realities. 535 831 [183]

The Haitian, like the West African, is undoubtedly a less tormented creature, so far as sex is concerned, than his European and American cousins. Since he is less tormented he can be more *frank*. And it was an expression of this frankness in certain of the Haitian secular dances that once aroused dismay among foreign chroniclers, and that still stirs the curiosity of tourists.

Yet if you were to witness fifty Haitian dances in their natural setting, you still might not see any direct sex expression. You might see more sex play and display in a dance hall or night club in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Los Angeles. That is not to say that there are no sexual allusions in Haitian dancing. In the ordinary Saturday night *bamboche*, or social dance, there may be a good deal of loin movement and suggestion. In Haitian context, however, it is no more significant than two persons of opposite sexes pressing close together to the music of a dreamy orchestra at the "Roseland." In Haitian religious dancing, sexual motifs may occasionally emerge, but they are integral parts of ritualistic symbolism.

One of the deficiencies of early literature on the dances of Haiti is that it did not differentiate between religious and secular dances. Furthermore, it is evident that writers tended to use a single name, such as Chica or Bamboula, to cover virtually any kind of dance festivity, much as many white Cubans refer today to all sorts of Afro-Cuban cult dances as Bembé. Because the terminology of ill-informed planters was adopted by the chroniclers, we are now able to form only some very general notions of Haitian dancing of the eighteenth century and before. Of all the reporters on the dance, Moreau de Saint-Méry seems to have been aware of differences, though his frequent departures into specula- 114 535

^[Quoted in Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 73.
Cf. p. 352, Category 116 -- Analyst]

114 535 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors. This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 533 535 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with [534] pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the centre of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas*.[4]

[114] [171] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 535 179 [171] Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the characteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

[2] [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 171 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . .[8] They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .[9]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Yenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all content of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometimes the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *bailé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase 177 178 533 535 (114)

[8] [Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. p. 353, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

[9] Moore, Op. Cit., p. 238. (Cf. p. 353, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]
Mousondi ou fai la gué!
Éya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la gué!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Éya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[164] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

184 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [515] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

S: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1960) 1960 SV3 [illegible]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

MX6 Azo. A snake deity.

Bossoule. A loa who likes the Ibolele dance.

Calabasse. Loa of the calabash tree.

Codan Pouda. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *adho* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Codan supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Segbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

[1N] [91]

Sosssin. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

Grann-Nan Dleau. Probably the same as Grann-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[PN] Agadja. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwanjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the vodu from the kingdom of Adja.[1] Hwanjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wanzil, or Hwanzil.

[SL] [DS] Linglessou. A rainbow loa. Persons [illegible] in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

Bassonsou. "Married" with Linglessou.

Wangol, also called Roi Wangol, (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

[98] Alowé, or Gangan. A mischievous, dwarflike spirit who likes to disarrange things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alowé may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Pétro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

Maît' Bois (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Maît' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Maît' Dleau (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

Dan Wèdo, or Wèdo. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan Whèdo.

Dya Kéné.

Efik, or Nèg' Efik. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

Fam Piérou. Said to be the son of Pierre Brisé.

Gédéon, Y[illegible], or Jean Baptiste. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

Grann Lanmonne. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

Grann Aïda, or Aïdo.

Grann Assongoèdo, or Mamman Assongoèdo. Believed to be a loa who was maît' tête of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a diminn or loup-garou rather than a loa.

Hountor. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hountor is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[PN] Jean Batan. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canaris* (clay water vessel).

[B7] Maît' Dan. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

[P 338]

4. Notes on Orthography

104 143 87 11 [212] The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education authorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormonde McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

104 Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-Laubach system. [114] It is my opinion that although the system is admirable for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: *Kouri pou-lapli, tòbé nã-gró*

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[1] [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P. 39. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ibid. Cf. P. 355, Category 116 -- Analyst]

rivié.[8] A system which permits recognition of the original French words would transcribe the proverb: *Couri pou' lapluie, tombé nan grand rivié.* 104

In this book, I have in the main used the semi-French forms. Regardless of the status of Creole as a separate language, a great part of its vocabulary is drawn from French, old or modern, and it has seemed unnecessary to disguise the connections of Creole with its antecedents. Nevertheless, I am aware that some of my orthographic choices coincide more with the McConnell-Laubach system than with the Gallic, and some may appear to belong to neither. I hope, however, that my transcribed texts will be easily read. 104 197 [114] ●

In most sociological and anthropological reports on Haiti which include texts the transcriptions are based on modified French orthography. Nevertheless, there have been many inconsistencies and contradictions, as there well may be within the covers of this book. One reason may be an inadequate understanding of the Creole language. A second reason can be, and often is, differences of pronunciation in various regions. 104 114

But the most significant differences occur in setting down words of non-French or probably non-French origin. One of the more noteworthy of these is *Vodoun*—a very important word without which it would be very difficult to write of Haitian life. Writers and anthropologists have spelled it in the following ways: Melville J. Herskovits—*Vodu* and *Vodun*; George Eaton Simpson—*Vodun* (after an earlier trial of *Vôdoun*); Odette Mennesson Rigaud—*Vodou*; Milo Rigaud—*Vaudou*; Robert A. Hall, Jr.—*Vaudoun*; Selden Rodman—*Voodoo*; Maya Deren—*Voudoun*; Eugène Aubin—*Vaudoux*.

Still other variations are to be found, particularly in the early literature on Haiti. In view of the general lack of agreement on this matter, it is not difficult to defend my own choice of *Vodoun* (French phonetics), which I used in previous writings.

Other important words which have numerous spellings are *houngan* (*hoûgan, houngan, hungan, houngnan, hougan*, etc.), *hounsi* (*hunsi, hounsih*, etc.), and the names of various loa.

λ [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, p. 199. Cf. p. 355, Category 116 -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 3-6 (1837–1951) 1960 [illegible]

[? 349)

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1–7)

[1] The name Canga survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2] Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique. [113] [195] [162] [569]

[3] Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8–18)

[1] See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2] Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Lovango all remedies and amulets are called gongo." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of ganga have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika ganga and Kongo nganga." [113] [193] [189] [191]

[3] Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 125; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4] From the Fon *hun-so* or *hun-si*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *hun-si* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest. [121] [194]

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, pp. 57–59.

[6] Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé. [114] [96]

[7] Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance. [114] [174] [175] [171] [193]

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19–29)

[1] The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root 776 192

996 192 as *hounsior, hounsi, hounsi-kanzo* and *hountor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 236-254), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

000 Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30–41*)

775 121 113 [1] Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2] Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

000 [3] Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88-89.

[121] [969] [illegible] [113] [4] W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 212.

[6] Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213-214.

[7] Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 74, pp. 180-185.

[8] Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162.

[9] As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10] Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11] This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[964] [966] [773] [996] [767] [525] [12] These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayamba* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13] Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15] Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

[964] [966] [114] [16] Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17] Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18] Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 358.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 357-358.

[21] Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22] Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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[p. v]

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

By Sidney W. Mintz*

THE *Haitian People*, by James G. Leyburn, was first published by the Yale University Press in 1941. The author, a sociologist, sought to provide his readers with a "connected story of the growth of . . . [Haiti's] social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life . . . [and] of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century" (p. v). Asserting that a people's past is an essential aspect of the full understanding of their present, Leyburn wasted no time in arguments over the disciplinary affiliation of his research results: "Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between these subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are" (p. vi). 114 121

The Haitian People enjoyed an immediate success. One of the very few books to deal with that country's crucial century of isolation (1804–1915), it is distinguished by careful scholarship, restrained interpretation, and a refreshing modesty; in these regards it differs from nearly every modern work written on the Republic of Haiti. And although many excellent books and articles on Haitian life have appeared since 1941, anyone who wishes to get the best interpretive overview of the history and culture of that country is well advised to start with Leyburn's contribution. 114

When *The Haitian People* first appeared, it was given a warm and

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* Dr. Rémy Bastien, M. Leslie F. Manigat, Jacqueline Wei Mintz, and Mr. Michael G. Owen provided valuable critical help in the preparation of this introduction. The author of *The Haitian People*, Professor James G. Leyburn, encouraged me to undertake the writing of the introduction, and offered useful advice on its form and content. I am much indebted to all of these persons for their generous assistance, but they are in no way responsible for the interpretations I have made here.

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● 114 very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. 105 A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. 114 But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end 175 the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had be- 648 gun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by [652] political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

175 105 Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those 175
gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé 105
regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950–56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith.

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has 114
increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians them- 121
selves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti.

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

● 114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening
121 years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this
can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms
of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have
modified it.

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114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure
[178] is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred
in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the
base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps
as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which
dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions.
These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all
important regards: level of income, source of income, education,
language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By
carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the
revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals
both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed
for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap
which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social
segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their
livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and
never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly
urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion
[58] is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization
[59] are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of
Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
114 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
565 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes
191 polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
771 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
583 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman
595 is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the
144 elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature 114
and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the 565
elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents 648
elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members
of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North 643
Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for 175
"stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians,
men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant
for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a
corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington
played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and
herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has
dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and
power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before
the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains,
principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic.
Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the
first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that
time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans'
choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner
and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until
the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely
dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized
power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, 701
it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with 565
its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of
Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and
through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in
Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized;
regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps,
made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated 114
sixty-nine "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had 175
this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of 643
Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only 669
eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and
seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, 565
then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as 701
somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who
seized office over the years.

648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

●114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—
144 that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

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* In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated 114
(but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: 563
the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, 144
and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. 565
In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically 871
intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the 114
period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the 175
Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the 565
present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more 643
black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intel- 175
lectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search 186
for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely 648
easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

175 American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century,
648 Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph
186 over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by
French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect,
[829] the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to
rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

● 114 As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity
culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it
- 829 politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became
- 175 an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language
871 began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy
212 through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing
191 the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as
814 expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore
their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was
555 French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of
643 two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express
what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique
and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and
they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were
given greater opportunities, especially to be educated
and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments
took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively
good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in
Haiti's entire history.

175 Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural
- 829 life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals
186 had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation
and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it
raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much
that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign
power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy
that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French
intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking,
both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were
inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those
islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African"
cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a
few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new 175 829
feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa. 186

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an im- 175
portant means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"— 829
picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly 814
self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic 175
structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the na- 433
tional cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class 565
structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have 647
occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 555
1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 114
179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge 175
in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of 565
such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations 175
(bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commod- 643
ities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by for-
eigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, en- [433]
joyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain at- 175
tempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was 643
brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. 669
The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of 665
François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

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* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by 114
Manigat, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in 175
spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propa- 642
ganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, 648
is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of 643
this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to
work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the
Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct 175
assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also 648
of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was [433]
notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic [114]
structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial [744]
changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the [20]
areas of health and health services, communications, government ad- [871]
ministration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée la- [489]
bor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary
guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institu- 175
tionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political 648
mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was 701
transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. 643
Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, 669
and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, 625
turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-
making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an
agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect
of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United
States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter
significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian
governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken
full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its
leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the
political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government
and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to 175
consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political 643
strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. 66
The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince,
had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum;
its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "para- 642
noid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not else-
where; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and
their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose
few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear [114]
these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian so-
ciety, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to re-
examine the terms that have been used by him and by others to de-
scribe it. 174

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from 175
each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. 171
Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely 648
populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic
lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of
the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of
policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other
islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts
of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was
conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation is-
lands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social
structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike [161]
most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations al-
most entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war,
early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the ves- [177]
tiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures
of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they [563]
were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding
with Old World migrants. 174

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing 175
with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never 171
able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and be- 167
havior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built
up out of elements originating in many different places, while their
social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The ooo
peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

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* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:845–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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175 same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in
177 the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of
178 unusual firmness and persistence.

171 This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic
productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued
433 convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth
311 have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in
161 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses,
565 though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable
-178 to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such
stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of
-175 the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining
● 114 the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic
511 shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

-565 The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength.
565 If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it
-433 to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political
664 decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous
642 possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America.
423 The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots
and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared
433 with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry
is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to
change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized
241 are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate
177 with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence.
While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop
choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence
orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially
sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma
sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is
good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common
in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to
land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to
landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that
is, even when the capital and labor power to
work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore
the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon
failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their
own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French
tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size
of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United
States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in
small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the
breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is
462 nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

443 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
241 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these activities
462 are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division
of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
462 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
174 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
175 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
443 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
241 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were
433 serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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580

457 country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some
445 migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service
668 "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and
642 have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to main-
66 tain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear,
167 however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative
political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

66 To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the re-
178 gime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

114 This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the re-
114 markable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment
of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes.
Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in
1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of
primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural
extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like.
Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for
planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of
the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social
648 values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-
inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash
projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than eco-
nomic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign
development agency representatives and government officials has
never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to
analysis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes,
rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would re-
quire actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf.
Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—prob-
ably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never
even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the funda-
mentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

114 In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble insti-
tutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given
to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure crea-
tively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author,
unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the
needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

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* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them
668 educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few
"Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued.
171 The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the
114 Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of *mass* political opposition to Batista-
type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized
into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti
of today.

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FOREWORD

The United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward 648
the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve 171
its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at
present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important
powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their
size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our
policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics
to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not
ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are
known to differ among themselves.

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. 721
The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little 648
country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest 642
colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence,
and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has
many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against
France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness
to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro
state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined
with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the
country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than
independent factors could produce.

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to 114 ●
answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure.
In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt
with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the
United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected
story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of
slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions
through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume 121
undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as
necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus-

121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

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178
563 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities, and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

● 114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

ing out of daily needs to make an adjustment to conditions as they were. A century later we can describe, with the wisdom coming from perspective, what people of the time could hardly perceive to be happening. 178

The people of Haiti have had to endure so much criticism from foreigners in past decades that it would be small wonder if they should dread the appearance of another book about their country. Herskovits, Parsons, Montague, Courlander, and other recent American authors, however, have abundantly proved that it is possible to treat the subject in scholarly fashion without wounding sensibilities. Every nation has unsavory items in its history and defects in its present state; this book has no intention of overdramatizing either the past or the present condition of Haiti. 114

All students who go from the United States to Haiti must sooner or later seek out Dr. Price-Mars, a true gentleman and scholar. He is not only one of the country's foremost intellectuals, but also a man of profound understanding and kindliness. I owe much to his illuminating suggestions, his practical assistance in my enterprise, and his patient answers to my questions. His works, whether historical, sociological, critical, or literary, are indispensable to an understanding of Haiti.

I am grateful likewise to Père Monteil, who during several weeks gave me the benefit of his years of experience among the people of his large parish, and who opened many avenues of research to me. The custodian of the excellent library of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne constantly aided my investigation. Père Demers allowed me on occasion to accompany him in his parish work. To all these men, and to the numerous other priests who showed me hospitality, I express my thanks.

It would be impossible to name all the persons who gave me help; yet I cannot forbear to mention former President Eugène Roy; Dr. Camille Lhérisson, a brilliant physician; Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, the historian; the directors of the agricultural school at Damien, and of the École Professionelle, École Centrale, and École Normale; M. Jean Fouchard, chef du Cabinet particulier du Président Vincent; M. Jacques Antoine, of the Haitian Legation in Washington; M. Édouard Estève, president of the Chambre du Commerce; Mme. Andrée Marini; M. Victor Montasse; and M. Émile Roy. All of these gave me valuable information, as did many other Haitians of high rank and low. I count it a particular privilege to number

114 among my sincere friends M. Westen Dauphin, of the Département des Finances, and his charming wife; the memory of their kindly generosity will long remain with me.

On one of my visits to Haiti Prof. John Lobb, of Mount Holyoke College, was my companion, and I owe him gratitude for his keen advice and criticism. Miss Annabel Learned gave much valuable assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. I have also profited from the suggestions of my student and friend, Mr. Alan F. Dill, who read a part of the manuscript of this book.

The true affection I feel for the Haitian people whose institutions I have here described cannot be measured in printed words.

J. G. L.

Yale University.
October, 1941.

162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

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[162] [7] The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four 162
or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or 184
on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes 105
through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count
only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The [434]
American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the
average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of
the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside
world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage [871]
of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental
stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of
wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive
land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose
own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little
wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along
at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of 105
about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry 161
and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 433
10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous 134
country which, after a century and a half of poor farming,
has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly 133
that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

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[8] Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258. [113]

[9] The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3. [875]

[10] Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has." [114] [434]

[11] One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former
owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, 565
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

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[4] Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties.
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of 565
their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica. 175 648

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[21] 175 642 648

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[21] The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote authority for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material. [114]

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even 643
ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she 721
had prayed for the success of Pétion. 563

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned
somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to 175
his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South 643
occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never- 167
ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and 563
leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between 175
cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats 565
who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was
strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of [461]
mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the
masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, [871]
neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight 114
in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which 175
an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military 642
despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

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[12] Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

114 642 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of
175 any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which
> [471] wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

175 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one
642 of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a
solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval
566 feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares.*
631 Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state
421 ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor,
625 and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the
Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district
692 granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

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[13] R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

[14] Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

[15] These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671] [16] The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

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The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion (1807–1818)*

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Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

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[17] Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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175 to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately
423 sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land
175 tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore
643 the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing
423 was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the
663 mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

175 He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried
423 landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of
[428] land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

100 As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

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● 114 [21] Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

423 [22] Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitians *from* Haitians.

they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to 175
have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse 643
him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every 642
group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask 175
the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? 433
Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic.
The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely 114
and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident 643
that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He 423
goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
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> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by [182]
> the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought [24]
> about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

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[32] J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.

[33] Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
● 114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

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[34] W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] [35] Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [36] In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Span-
[643] ish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since
[642] 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in
[648] 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were 175
responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to 692
their military superiors. 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the 175
serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black suc- 566
cessors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's,
but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There 671
is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure.

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away 175
throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and 423
efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided

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[41] R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'inféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

> 703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single
466 holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
625 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any
661 worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community

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625 [44] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.
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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
● 114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

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[534] [45] Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] [46] Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There
are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who under- 175
take to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the 427
produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, 175
who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which 114
seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was ad- 466
dressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils.*"[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the 175
close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman: 114

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of 433
> tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup 249
> to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres 674
> of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus in- 311
> vades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in 461
> the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank 175
until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his 435
estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition 423
on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land
might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it [671]
even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. [425]
Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

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[47] James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.

[48] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.

[49] V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1843), II, 263 ff.

175 563 Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

175 563 ● 114 643 671 Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

[56] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 221. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inaction partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

[57] Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 259.

trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of 175
the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges 563
of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. 564
Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it
was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having
children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude
toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or
seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. [193]
Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more
than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests
imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among
the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication
that the European priests, since they were well paid for their
services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived
a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the
churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence
in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had
befriended Boyer in former times.

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the 114
Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it: 175

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the 642
> most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of
> American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people
> replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual
> vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time
> denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these
> inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and 175
assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in 563
the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere
widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these
distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or
by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, 175
was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands 565
of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built 563

[61] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa
situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682. [113]

however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people 175
and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. 178
Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people 433
ignorant, one hardly looks for progress. [511]

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through
most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most 114
vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and 175
found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he 178
reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a 433
horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise
him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the 466
arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be 24
the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the 175
Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from 178
the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence 181
of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a 466
plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-
two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who 464
were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only 427
twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

> appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

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[65] See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

[66] Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship 175
would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual 652
indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen
acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The [171]
straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration 175
of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had 643
finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, 671
Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educa- 423
tional. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen
of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked [648]
money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

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[7] See above, pp. 70–71.

[8] Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

[9] J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites [114]
these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le* [423]
retour à la terre, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

175 178 565 829 However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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[114] [829] [6] See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

[114] [829] [7] This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1833–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; 175
he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread 178
the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the 565
travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, 829
"Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did 175
not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing 648
them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, 177
mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of 563
the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. 829
Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

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[8] Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'" [114] [829]

[9] "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

[10] See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership." [114] [648]

VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries. 175 771

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [792]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

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[1] It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] [771] [178]

[2] A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of 175
the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were grow- 795
ing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no 771
real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests.

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic 175
Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was 795
now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. 771
By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop,
bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." 659
The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were 643
no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests.

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leader- 175
ship, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to
be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called 795
priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy 793
orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to
rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting [114] ●
Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he

175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
● [114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and
for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit un-
795 limited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
771 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little
184 acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was
nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated
are about where the French were when they left the island. They
believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and atten-
tive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

> are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

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[9] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.

[10] Chap. IV, articles 28–31.

[11] The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.

[12] Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set 175
apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president 114
and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I 771
believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside 796
for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed
down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of 184
religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, 175
on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indiffer-
ent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan mission- 795
aries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were 797
met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that
they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was [162]
estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain 175
satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled
both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the ap- 795
proval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to 648
do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior 659
group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with 643
recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

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[13] James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

VII

VODUN

1. *Misconceptions*

THE second religion of Haiti is Vodun. It is not mentioned by officials as one of the spiritual assets of the country; its priests wear no regular habit; it has no town churches. Yet it is the living religion of the masses. Catholicism may have official and social sanction; indeed, most peasants do consider themselves as belonging to that faith, yet it is doubtful whether in any other Western country there is so universal an adherence to a common religion as in Haiti to Vodun. 771

If there had been a paid campaign of propagandist misinformation, it is unlikely that more untruths and half-truths could have been put into circulation about this faith of the Haitian people. Moreau de Saint-Méry describes something of it in his classic work on colonial matters, although most of what he tells concerns the dances, which he considered primarily a form of recreation. Pious visitors to Haiti in the early years of independence labeled it simply as a form of superstition and did not bother either to understand or misrepresent it. By the time of Soulouque it was known as a rather definite folk religion, but only after 1863 did what was really a simple set of religious beliefs and practices suddenly become notorious, making Haiti the object of macabre curiosity and of reports whose chief characteristic was gruesomeness. 114 771

In 1863 occurred the *Affaire de Bizoton*, and it may as well be recounted forthwith as the prime origin of all misunderstanding which has pursued Haitian religion—although to emphasize it is like giving an account of Christianity with all the emphasis on witch burnings, torture of heretics, and excesses of bigotry. 175 771

On December 27, 1863, a little girl of Bizoton named Claircine disappeared from home during the absence of her mother. Search for her was futile until after several days it was discovered that she had been killed and used as part of a sinister sacrifice by religious fanatics. An inquest, discreetly managed, resulted in the arrest of fifteen people, of whom eight were longer detained. The trial of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 771 [682] these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign legations and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident; following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

● 114 771 In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir Spenser St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The Black Republic*. It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spenser made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affaire de Bizoton*. He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

114 771 believe. It stuck in people's minds. Since Sir Spenser's time tourists to Haiti have habitually spent a few hours ashore, heard drumbeats from the hills, and shuddered deliciously as they conjured up images of weird goings-on—black magic, licentious dances, and frenetic orgies. Novelists during the past half-century have spun their tales full of local color, while "serious" authors have made small fortunes out of pseudo-scientific books with just enough fact mingled with their lush imaginings to give "an air of similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Their language runs into such purple phrases as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened,"[1] to describe the religious exaltation of the people at a Vodun service. Under this constant rain of misrepresentation, Haitians who care for the good opinion of other nations have become extremely sensitive on the subject of the folk religion. Many of them deny its existence; others speak of it as something beneath their attention. The more they try to cover it over, however, with silence and professed contempt, the more mysteriously fascinating it becomes to the foreign visitor. The tourist who goes to Paris expects to see the Eiffel Tower, whatever its aesthetic faults; the tourist in Haiti wishes to see, without quite knowing what he means by the term, "a Voodoo dance." No amount of scientific writing about the real character of Vodun will change the popular misconception. For every reader of accurate ethnographical or anthropological treatises on Vodun[2] there are hundreds who feast morbidly on sensational books.

192 Haitian Vodun is not the same as the hoodoo of American Negroes.[3] The word is etymologically the same, whether American Voodoo, Haitian Vodun, French Vaudoux, or Spanish judu (whence our "hoodoo"): all derive from a Dahomean (West African) word signifying "god" or "spirit."[4] It is the generic term for all deities.

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[1] This phrase is taken from W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York, 1929), p. 42, but might easily have come from half a dozen other journalistic descriptions. [114]

[2] Particularly recommended are Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (Port-au-Prince, 1928). [173]

[3] See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 139 ff.

[4] The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in a surprisingly superficial and brief article, gives a singular etymology to "Voodoo," tracing it to the Swiss canton of Vaud, where in the Middle Ages a heterodox faith sprang up which had to be practiced in secret. The implication is that any secret religion might be called "Vaud-ois," or "Voodoo." Evidently the author of the encyclopaedia article had made no serious investigation of the subject; most modern dictionaries, on the other hand, indicate the Dahomean etymology. [192]

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● 114 771 This was recognized in colonial times by Moreau de Saint-Méry, who wrote: "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony, . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on whom depend all the events which come to pass on this earth."[5]

771 Vodun is a true religion, in the same sense that Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Christianity are all true religions. That is to say, it is a set of beliefs and practices which claim to deal with the spiritual forces of the universe, and attempt to keep the individual in harmonious relation with them as they affect his life. The word "superstition" is relative. It is a subjective term, being generally applied to beliefs which we consider ourselves too wise, too advanced, to cling to. The sophisticated skeptic calls the belief in miracles superstition; the Christian regards the reverence for certain animals in India superstition: it is all a matter of view. Using the greatest number of criteria available for the definition of religion as distinct from vague superstition, religion may be said to be a set of beliefs about spirits or gods and their nature, about the origin of the world, about good and evil, about man's relation to the universe he knows; it includes a set of practices of worship; it is an attempt to ward off misfortune and to get good; it treats of what happens after death; it is a system of seeking security, solace, and support in the face of a supposed supernatural.[6]

Vodun is all of these.

771 177 Like any other vital religion which has spread from its original centre, endured through the years, and come into contact with other faiths, Vodun is not at the present what it was in its early days. Like others it has unconsciously borrowed—and in borrowing, transformed—ideas, concepts, practices, rites.[7] The greatest single influence exerted upon it has been that of the Roman Catholic Church with which the people have had continuous dealings, increasing in recent years, for more than a century and a half. Many aspects of

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[5] In his *Description . . . de la partie française de . . . Saint-Domingue*, I, 46.

[6] This alliterative phrase was suggested as a partial definition of religion by Prof. Raymond Kennedy.

[7] It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity is no longer the simple faith taught by Jesus, but a composite of that faith with scholarly theology, absorbed local practices, mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire, secular philosophy—and, to put it briefly, the accretions of changing time. Similarly, Buddhism is more than the doctrines of Gautama, and Mohammedanism more (and less) than Mohammed taught.

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except 771
for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly 171
have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily 174
life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple
black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was
chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the
colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The [776]
Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the [796]
worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. [535]
Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the
validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No
hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these
were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a
Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the
composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever 174
considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a 535
faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. 796
Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly [192]
enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal [114]
diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were
"superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the
word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not
regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use 175
the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their
dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, 669
gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample 567
opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for 202
revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro 793
Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, 771
which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing
but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance
in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one
plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity
of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and
language, by the Vodun background. 114

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been 175
rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who 669
668

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175 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But
669 when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against
668 their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a
[793] ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

776 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the
793 rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their
761 own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the
782 spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that
781 when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial
[789] patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

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[171] [781] [8] A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[114] [781] [9] The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be 175
turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it 771
still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, 114
Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the
occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman [787]
who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand [789]
without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as 114
a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, 771
plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of 781
papas, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves 175
against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to 643
overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently inno- 796
cent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance 671
gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and 659
Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to 669
drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an 794
inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon 798
at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

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[10] M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.

[11] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.

[12] In an order of January 4, 1800.

The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
796 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
671 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a supersti-
659 tious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the
offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew
how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of
other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the
meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say.
He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but
rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African
fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
794 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
659 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
798 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose
curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

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[13] Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.

[14] See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.

[15] Zachary Macaulay, *Haïti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect 114
and homage.[16] 796

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when 771
Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism,* such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

> The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the 175
stages of the development of Vodun as follows: 771

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was 794
steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before 175
then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then 771
ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had
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16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo,* II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti,* p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haiti: ses progrès—son avenir,* pp. 24–25.

for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows: 771

> I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;
>
> I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa." or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;
>
> I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 771 177 776 [796] 114 178 776

> This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

119 178 776 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

771 776 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 781 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 776 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

[19] Dorsainvil, op. cit., p. 36.

[783] [20] A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth. 771 776

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native accepance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 776 174 192 [198] [114]

114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much
more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
196 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
174 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a
776 certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of *Petit-Goâve*.
This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become
776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some
776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide
district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because
he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvri barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

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[21] Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[22] Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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787 The language of possession is descriptive. When a god seizes a man, he "mounts" him; the possessed person forthwith becomes the god's "horse." The words are accurate, for the god seems to have as much control over his mount as a human rider would have over a horse whose will he dominates. The person mounted does nothing of his own accord while he is possessed. Under the invisible whip of the spirit-rider the "horse" does a great many things, and says even more, that would be unnatural or even impossible to him, unridden.[26]

Possession is more than the affair of a moment. In this respect it differs again from kindred seizures known to whites. A person may have to wait for many years before he is finally mounted, but the first loa who descends upon him is the chief of his deities, taking precedence over any other who might subsequently possess him. The initial seizure is a vitally important experience, corresponding roughly to the conversion or confirmation of persons in other religions. The subject is carefully observed by experts, so that no mistake will be made in the deductions from actions and speech as to the identity of the god. This loa is baptized by sprinkling water on the head of the possessed person. Thereafter the loa is called "*maît' tête*," as a recognition of the subservience of his mount: any agreement the devotee might make with another loa under a particular possession would have to conform to the initial agreement with the maît' tête. At a man's death the loa, which has, like more than a guardian angel, accompanied him through life, is taken from his head so that the man's soul may go to God—the Christian God.[27]

The possessing god may be either male or female. It frequently happens that a male loa mounts a female devotee, in which case she is addressed by a male name, wears male clothes, eats and drinks the things her loa prefers (no matter how distasteful to her ordinarily), and otherwise manifests his characteristics. This extraordinary change of personality is accepted naturally enough by the other participants in the rites, although the transformation is to foreigners a psychological phenomenon of prime interest. Dr. Dorsainvil devotes a book to the neuroses connected with possession; as he says: "One of the first consequences of the Vodoun crisis is the substitution for the

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[26] Zora Neale Hurston, in her gaily written *Tell My Horse* (Philadelphia, 1938), has a vivid chapter on the possession effected by the distinctly Haitian loa, Guédé. She entitles this chapter in Creole: "*Parlay cheval ou*" (Tell my horse)—the words with which the loa begins to dictate through the mouth of his mount. See pp. 232–250.

[27] See Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 146–152.

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normal personality of the subject a second, accidental personality which, except in the cases of conscious simulation, introduces real modifications in the ordinary state of being of the possessed person."[28] The phrase is noteworthy: "except in the cases of conscious simulation." Since the possessing loa frees his mount of his normal personality, certain persons at times try to pretend that they have been mounted in order to gain a desired end, which may be amatory, vindictive, or whatever. The people, however, are well acquainted with the normal penchants of everyone in the community; when they have their doubts about the authenticity of a seizure, they can easily by teasing words arouse the pretender's quite normal anger, by ingenious movements call forth an everyday response and so make the "mount" betray his ruse. 787

Since the main emphasis of this chapter is upon the religious, not the psychological, aspects of possession, no more than a passing reference can be made to the absorbing question of the normality of seizure. Two facts are important: it is confidently expected that possession will occur at every significant service; and it is known beforehand that not every worshiper will be subject to it. Some of the people seem to be definitely incapable of intense religious feeling or expression, others react almost immediately with overwhelming emotion, still a third group senses the mystery but cannot take the final step of inspiration.

Dr. Dorsainvil, a physician and historian, considering the recognized capabilities and limitations of Vodun worshipers with regard to seizure, maintains that possession is a species of neurosis, resulting in part from the historical tradition which makes seizure respectable and desirable and in part from the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in families. Professor Herskovits, an anthropologist and ethnographer, avers on the contrary that possession is, in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, not abnormal but normal. He would stress the first of the two facts above: seizures occur at all important services. He does not deny the release afforded from psychic tension by yielding to possession; also he grants that the seizure might secure for a man the fulfillment of his suppressed desires for material goods or physical satisfactions. What impresses him, however, is the rules which rigidly govern possession. Gods are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite—that is, if the loa are under 114 787

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[28] Dorsainvil, op. cit., p. 115.

787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go
away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own
personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent.
Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun
variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian
standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience
known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds
nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic
sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any
other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In
Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

778 In the tiny *houmfort* (also spelled *hounfort*) of the priest, which is
346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to
confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is
no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian
church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people
were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high
altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles,
fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever
other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and
individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic
patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and
as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or
female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of
the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends
will attend the subsequent dance.

796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
177 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun
element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

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[29] The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the 171
afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is 845
being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the 787
sacrifice. [782]

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is 761
necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief
to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both
death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion
from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to
confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows
(on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for [166]
example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside
and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with [181]
pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the
unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with
simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been
at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have 769
exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other 177
part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows
no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over [764]
the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic
priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual
efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks
of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult
begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the
dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power
comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put suc-
cinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and 114
ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all 776
the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives 769

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[30] W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

114
776 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover
769 gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and be-
havior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would
765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would
775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not.
782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of
775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It
789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except
one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the state-
798 ment: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

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[31] See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[32] In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man 754
who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. 776
Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, how-
ever, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more
than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of 789
weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be
unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share
of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple
folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has
reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief [114] ●
in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda [192]
language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to
Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

> Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly 114
> spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of 754
> charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring
> them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skep- 754
tics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

754 arranged the "death" will hasten to the graveyard and dig up the body; giving the proper antidote to the poison, he restores the body to activity but the mind only to semiconsciousness. In this subnormal state the victim is taken off to some remote valley where, in company with other zombis, he is made to work as a slave. Physical strength is there, but no mind with which to rebel, to ask for pay, to recognize the full extent of his sorry state.[39]

● 114 754 Zora Neale Hurston is the only foreigner who states that she has definitely seen a zombi. In her book, *Tell My Horse*, she describes the woman who had been a zombi and includes a picture of her.[40] The reader cannot suppress a query as to whether the supposed zombi might not have suffered simply from a special kind of insanity. Miss Hurston tells very graphically the peasant tales of "dead" persons made into zombis: of parents, husbands, and wives who have seen and clung to their recent relatives without the slightest responding sign of recognition, of men who are known to have zombis in their employ.

754 766 When a person has died a sudden death without apparent cause, a houngan will very likely be called to try to discover the malefactor, although it is not believed that he will be able to bring back to life the "dead" person. In cases where sudden death is regarded as suspicious, the survivors often see to it that the apparent corpse becomes a real one by plunging a knife into the heart or by cutting out some vital part, in order to spare the corpse the degradation of a zombi's slavery. Or families lacking the courage to mutilate a corpse will watch at the grave until it is certain that the body has begun to putrefy and real death has succeeded to the simulation. Once actual death has come, of course, the malefactor is thwarted and prevented from capitalizing on his evil work.

754 In a mental atmosphere of credulity, coincidence often makes magic seem to work. Belief gives power to the charm or rite. A person aware that a spell is cast upon him will sicken and die because he believes so firmly in the efficacy of the magic. A curse will be

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[114] [39] In support of this theory of a poison which produces stupor, Seabrook, *op. cit.*, p. 335, cites the French text of the Code Pénal, Article 249, as follows: "*Est aussi qualifié attentat à la vie d'une personne, l'emploi qui sera fait contre elle de substances qui, sans donner la mort, produisent un effet léthargique plus ou moins prolongé, de quelque manière que ces substances aient administrés, quelles qu'en aient été les suites. Si par suite de cet état léthargique la personne a été inhumée, l'attentat sera qualifié assassinat.*"

[40] Pp. 189–209.

The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic
and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing
in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to
today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun
by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born
into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to
175 attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint
643 was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants
were the best minds of France, England, and the United States.
648 Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic
and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex
831 conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and
175 first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the
643 economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense
831 against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements
he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until
some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very
proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the
benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness.
[582] His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions,
treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black
175 general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured
643 his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet
159 showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his
831 favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture
toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was
married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In
every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing
large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction,
honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued
their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence,
for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young
and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

114 The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable
643 paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him
159 on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his
831 authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

> Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by 643
> actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon 159
> as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in 831
> order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western 175
country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken 831
up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the 581
white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were 175
known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of 848
infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in 428
matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

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[3] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

000 it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly
well-to-do.

671 The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the
moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte
581 de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners.
● 114 Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is
175 unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted."
[586] All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried.
Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe
had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his
people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out
of their African and colonial backgrounds.

175 While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North,
184 Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law
671 during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of mar-
riage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal
581 marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children.
428 The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if
[585] property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in
their little communities.

105 Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex rela-
tions have developed. From African tradition came family life, the
175 importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wed-
178 ding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent;
58 from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family
59 with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this
421 marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast
to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from
Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism;
from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in mar-
riage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

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[7] A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
175 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
● 114 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
581 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
588 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those
565 sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept
> [162] numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

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[1] *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.

[2] *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

> ● [114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
562 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored
women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs,*" not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

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[3] *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.

[4] *La Géographie de l'Ile d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

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[114] [5] *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[581] [6] John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI,
[554] No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not 162
merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the
country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investi- [659]
gator lacks *means of confirming an unusual biological situation in* [163]
which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many
more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher [165]
for females than for males.

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the 175
colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more 162
than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1]

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts 163
and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of [114]
females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set

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[1] These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 118.

[2] One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a [114]
few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child [163]
should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate [551]
the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population.

have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and 593
women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom 241
between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee. 439

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. 134
The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, 311
and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun.
Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to 311
use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore,
during every month of the year except the dry season. There 241
has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for 241
cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has 574
almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. 476
What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any [527]
day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

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[6] The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help. [192]

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean. [014] [192]

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241 day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally
574 Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows,
[527] of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is
[461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

• 114 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described
476 in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville
J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in
574 detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of
174 the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are
171 nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger
178 than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States
and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is
241 not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

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[7] A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).

[8] *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

what remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most 174
natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. 241
Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The 574
phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean 476
coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the
crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long back- 241
ground of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations 175
of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor ré-
gimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. 462
They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of 701
the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community.

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 114
as follows:

> The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting 114
> toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government 462
> clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient 461
> types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months
> or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women [701]
> that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long

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461 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women
462 of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy
and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not
175 mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the
material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was
overly optimistic.

441 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market,
443 which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source
of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost
175 imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development
441 that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being
either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came
462 to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work.
466 From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional
702 reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits
were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

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[9] *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
[10] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural 175
work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands 441
indoors during the hours of daylight. 462

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred 175
years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets 441
at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 463 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were *cheerful and happy.*"[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the 114
Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been
leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be 461
discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

> the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

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[11] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
[12] *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti*, p. 536.

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> 114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coërcion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

> [462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

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[13] *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 359–362.

[14] *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.

[15] Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.

[16] *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.

[17] *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable 114
to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the 461
Haitian male; and to ask why.

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the 175
American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost 701
every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime
a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 461
1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers.

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence 174
of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor
has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced 462
to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from 562
what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, 567
and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant.

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems 164
to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as 461
hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious.

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It 140

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19] 342 [515]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment. 352 [415]

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 653 492 493 491 114 105

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally 177 178

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[19] Franklin, op. cit., p. [illegible].

[20] Op. cit., II, [illegible].

XII

POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of 640
another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political
terminology grows out of national and local experience, so
that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group
conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are
entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize
upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to
do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the
other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political
thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail.

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly 175
complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the 114
intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education,
heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently
with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies
are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful
whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except
possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged:
both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat
either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political
matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned
with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers
have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their
government.

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 175
1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the 178
people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming
the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, 64
religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced
the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we
have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government
—solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice
or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve
in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to 175
popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded 648
found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power 642
came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically un- 175
broken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency 643
ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once
more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince;
instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men
who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti 175
arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had 642
taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility
productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal
situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and
the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with
assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political [661]
office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own [666]
advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done
to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and [565]
education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical
education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a
graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported [643]
by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One
can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite [565]
for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase
of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural
Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the
peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies
political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no 178
light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by 65
education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

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[20] Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named 693
by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a 695
worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and 641
a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular 114
feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts 175
thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. 642
I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really 171
matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

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[3] Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.

[4] "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 453.

•114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a
175 work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will
improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
642 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general
466 for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the
forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the
forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
642 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of
563 forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government.
One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this
territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were
sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic
name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was
not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical
art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the
old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and
self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the
breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No
one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to
disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

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[5] Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

[6] He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed 175
the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal 695
from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower
courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear
the proof that the debt was just.

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were 693
appointed by the government because of political considerations.
Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in 695
general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in 641
particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts.

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before 691
the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal
matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of
serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the
commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape
have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic 674
have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10]

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[9] Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's earnest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

[10] In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [683]

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Besides the figures given above must be set those of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

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[3] "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

2. *Health*

180 Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the
slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are
164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger
has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their
stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment.
Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people
actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a
balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of
hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It
is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out
when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon
this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended
[261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of
geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their
unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the
practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and
743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There
759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a
score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital
facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de-
114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking
164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further
described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond
all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the
ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and
curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

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[5] "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.

[6] *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

184 ranging from those requiring strict observance down to those permitting latitude of behavior.

● 114 [12.1] It has, then, been the primary purpose of this book to show the gradual development (the word is used with no connotation of progress toward a conscious goal) of a consistent group of mores and social institutions in Haiti since the moment of her independence. The course of Haitian social history provides an almost unlimited opportunity for further study along the lines of contemporary American sociological research. Certain skeptics have pertinently criticized this sociology as narrowly provincial, calling it a social science limited only to the American scene, and valid consequently only for American society. Such a charge is precisely the reverse of that directed at European sociology, which finds congenial the development of philosophies of history independent of research in any specific field.

If the active American sociologist should extend his field of investigation he would, whatever his dominant interest, find much to reward his research in Haiti. For example, some of the most productive work in the United States has been in studies of neighborhoods,[2] communities,[3] and regions.[4] No neighborhood study has ever been made in Haiti, nor any regional study. Herskovits[5] has pointed the way to all future students of Haitian communities. Most research done by scholars in Haiti, however, has concerned itself with one or another of the social institutions (religion has been the most popular) rather than with thorough studies of individual communities.

For the social psychologist Haiti presents a rich and untouched field. It has the advantages of a limited geography and population, and so is less complex than the United States; yet Haitian problems are familiar enough to make comparison with American problems valid. Not only has there as yet been no investigation of the process of socialization, that is, of what happens to children as they take on

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[2] The neighborhood is generally defined as a primary group in society in which face-to-face contacts are frequent and intimate.

[3] The community is a group of people living in comparative proximity, sharing basic interests and activities, having relatively common usages and traditions, and acknowledging common rule.

[4] The region is a functional part of a larger area of economic, cultural, and geographical homogeneity. The Southeastern States of the United States are conceived as a region; in Haiti, the five departments are regions.

[5] In his *Life in a Haitian Valley*. This is a study of the community in and around Mirebalais.

114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict.
[563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

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[6] See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

[p. 322]

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127 NOTE: When research was first begun upon the economic and social development of Haiti, permission was asked for an examination of Haitian Archives. The reply of the governmental official was cordial and frank. He remarked: "*Nos bouleversements politiques et de nombreux incendies ont occasionné la perte ou la destruction totale d'une partie appréciable des documents haïtiens. Et, il faut l'avouer, avec peine, nous n'avons jamais eu une organisation méthodique pour la conservation des pièces et documents officiels.*" Research in the Archives Générales de la République d'Haïti revealed the truth of the official's statement: there is practically nothing relating to nineteenth-century Haiti. Reliance had, therefore, to be placed upon contemporary accounts, some published, some in manuscript, rather than upon official documents.

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113 *Le Moniteur* (*journal officiel de la République d'Haïti*). This newspaper, begun on
● 114 Feb. 8, 1845, is an excellent source of officially approved news and comment. Certain administrations during the course of the century have shown a genius, however, for cautious editing of news.

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Dorsinville, Luc. *Géographie-Atlas*. Port-au-Prince, 1929. A textbook for the "cours moyen," but giving many useful data about the area and population and resources of the country.

Douglas, Paul H. "The American Occupation of Haiti." *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII, 228–258, 368–396, 1927.

Douglass, Frederick. *Lecture on Haiti*. Chicago, 1893. A thoughtful work of the celebrated American Negro abolitionist.

Durand, Oswald. *La Dernière étape*. Port-au-Prince, 1906. One of the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti?" series.

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Edouard, Emmanuel. *Essai sur la politique intérieure d'Haïti.* Paris, 1890. Too limited in scope to be useful.

Faine, Jules. *Philologie créole.* ("*Études historiques et étymologiques sur la langue créole d'Haïti.*") Port-au-Prince, 1937. A scholarly treatise on the Créole language which is fascinating even to the layman. It contains an orderly grammar, a good vocabulary, and many aids to a better understanding of the popular language.

Firmin, Anténor. *Diplomates et diplomatie.* Cap-Haïtien, 1899. Sage observations by a distinguished Haitian.

——— *Haïti au point de vue politique, administratif et économique.* Paris, 1891. A good critique of the period.

——— *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haïti.* New York, 1905. An acceptance of the assurance of Theodore Roosevelt that no nation capable of governing itself had any need to fear American Occupation.

Fletcher, Henry P. "Quo vadis, Haiti?" *Foreign Affairs*, VIII, 533–548, 1930.

Forbes and Tuckerman. *Papers Relating to the Colonization Experiment at A'Vache.* New York, 1865. Discussion of another scheme for the settlement of freed American slaves in Haiti.

Foreign Policy Association. *The Seizure of Haiti by the United States.* New York, 1922.

Fortunat, Dantès. *Nouvelle géographie de l'île d'Haïti.* Paris, 1888. Useful only for the period.

Franklin, James. *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo).* London, 1828. A good summary of Haitian history to 1826. Decidedly adverse in its criticism of Haiti's development, although not actually prejudiced. The author thinks Christophe's policy of forced labor was wise, and Pétion's *laissez-faire* policy foolish.

Froude, James Anthony. *The English in the West Indies.* New York, 1888. As dramatic and as inaccurate as most of Froude's historical works.

Gaïtier, Civique de. *Histoire de la république d'Haïti.* Paris, 1819. Utterly worthless; it is not a history, but rather a plea to the European powers of the time to recognize the independence of Haiti.

Grégoire, Henri. *De la liberté de conscience et de culte à Haïti.* (No place of publication mentioned), 1824. This is a bibliographical oddity, for in spite of the title there is no discussion of the subject at all; rather the little book is a pastoral letter by a priest.

Hanna, S. W. *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Haiti, January–February, 1835.* London, 1836. A breezy travelogue by a pious clergyman. Useless except as corroboration of outward aspects. Hanna explains Mackenzie's adverse criticisms of Haiti by saying that the British Minister was a mulatto, and so was not well received in Haiti.

Harvey, W. W. *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French to the Death of Christophe.* London, 1827. In spite of the unassuming title, one of the most rewarding collections of source material in the early period.

Hazard, Samuel. *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; with a Glance at Haiti.* New York, 1873. The glance included little of importance.

Herring, Hubert. "Haitian Troubles Continue." *Current History*, XLII, 78–79, 1935. Brief statement of the months following the end of the American Occupation.

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HERSKOVITS, MELVILLE J. *Dahomey, an Ancient West African Kingdom.* New York, 1938. 2 vols. A splendid study of the region from which many of the Haitian slaves derived.

——— *Life in a Haitian Valley.* New York, 1937. One of the few ethnographical studies of a Haitian community, made by an expert. The whole range of life of the people of Mirebalais is studied in detail. The result is a book not only for scholars but for laymen. Indispensable

——— "The Significance of the Study of Acculturation for Anthropology." *American Anthropologist,* n.s. XXXIX, No. 2, 259-264.

HUNT, BENJAMIN S. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans.* Philadelphia, 1860. Another brochure on the migration of freed American slaves. Hunt's observations are often illuminating.

HURSTON, ZORA NEALE. *Tell My Horse.* Philadelphia, 1938. A gaily written study of certain details of life in Jamaica and Haiti. Much of the detail is hearsay, some is inaccurate, but a great deal is carefully observed.

INGINAC, JOSEPH BALTHASAR. *Culture du caféier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce.* Port-au-Prince, 1840. One of the pamphlets which Boyer's meticulous secretary of state issued to the illiterate peasants to improve their economic life.

——— *Étrennes à mes concitoyens: Nécessité de l'éducation morale et religieuse en Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1841. A paternal homily on morals.

——— *Mémoires.* Kingston (Jamaica), 1843. After the Revolution of 1843 had overthrown Boyer, Inginac went into exile with his President. In Jamaica he wrote his memoirs, which consist partly of autobiography, but mostly of an impassioned defense of every action of his long secretaryship. He never made a mistake; and if Boyer had only followed Inginac's advice, there would have been no revolution.

——— *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier.* Port-au-Prince, 1843. A brief pamphlet by Inginac, urging his innocence of any treason, and pleading with the new government to allow him to return from exile.

INMAN, SAMUEL GUY. *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti.* New York, 1919. With observations on the American Occupation.

JANVIER, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs.* Paris, 1883. Unimportant.

——— *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85.* Paris, 1886. Excellent, not only because it contains a text of the numerous Haitian constitutions, but also for its judicious analysis of the contents of each.

JEAN-LOUIS, H. "La Race créole." *Les Annales diplomatiques et consulaires,* vol. II, No. 17, Paris, 1904, November 5.

JONES, L. H. "The Haitian Problem," in A. C. Wilgus, ed., *The Caribbean Area.* Washington, 1934.

JOHNSON, JAMES WELDON. "Self-determining Haiti." *Nation,* August 25, September 25, 1920. The title is satirical, for Haiti in 1920 was occupied by the Americans.

JOHNSTON, SIR HARRY H. *The Negro in the New World.* New York, 1910. Well written but necessarily superficial, considering the magnitude of the topic. Certain wise judgments about Haiti.

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JONES, CHESTER LLOYD. *The Caribbean Since 1900.* New York, 1936. The section on Haiti is adequate as a brief survey.

JUSTIN, JOSEPH. *Études sur les institutions haïtiennes.* Paris, 1894–95. 2 vols. What was wrong with Haiti under Hyppolite.

——— *Les Réformes nécessaires.* Port-au-Prince, 1915. The sad state of Haitian affairs twenty years later.

JUSTIN, PLACIDE. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue.* ("*Écrite sur des documents officiels et des notes communiquées par Sir James Barskett, agent du gouvernement britannique dans les Antilles.*") Paris, 1826. Actually, up to 1816, a copy of the work by Barker [*q.v.*], whose name Justin misspells; for the succeeding decade, Justin's material is almost wholly political, and not particularly helpful.

KELSEY, CARL. "The American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. C, March, 1922.

KUSER, JOHN D. *Haiti: Its Dawn of Progress after Years in a Night of Revolution.* Boston, 1921. Useless.

LAUJON, A. DE. *Souvenirs de trente années de voyages à Saint-Domingue.* Paris, 1835. 2 vols. Unimportant.

LAVENTURE, LÉONIDAS. *Haïti: le danger de la patrie.* Port-au-Prince, 1893. What is wrong with Haiti.

LÉGER, ABEL NICOLAS. *Histoire diplomatique d'Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1930. Good.

LÉGER, JACQUES NICHOLAS. *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs.* (Likewise an edition in English, *Haiti: Her History and Her Detractors.*) Both: New York, 1907. An effort to correct erroneous impressions of Haiti. Léger sees even the defects of Haiti through rose-colored glasses.

——— *La Politique extérieure d'Haïti.* Paris, 1886. Inferior.

LÉGITIME, F. DÉNIS. "La République d'Haïti et les races africaines en général." Port-au-Prince, 1912. A lecture given by one of Haiti's Negro ex-presidents at the Universal Congress on Race in 1911; nothing more than a superficial sketch of Haitian history.

LEPELLETIER DE SAINT-REMY, R. "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4, November 15, 1845. An excellent analysis of the social, economic, and political conditions which led up to the Revolution of 1843, and the disturbances of the next two years.

——— *Saint-Domingue. Étude et solution nouvelle de la question haïtienne.* Paris, 1846. 2 vols. One of the very best sources for the economic history of Haiti through the administration of Boyer. Intelligently critical; many suggestive points of constructive nature.

LE ROUGE, GABRIEL. *Ou vivre libres et respectés ou mourir lamentablement décimés par la guerre civile.* Port-au-Prince, 1916. Another in the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti" series.

LEVACHER, M. G. *Guide médical des Antilles.* Paris, 1847. A fair account, giving the medical knowledge of the period, of health conditions in Haiti and the other Antilles.

LHERISSON, CAMILLE. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti." *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8, 924–929, August, 1935. An excellent survey by one of the most brilliant doctors of Haiti.

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Livre bleu d'Haïti. Port-au-Prince, 1920. A kind of social register, and business roster of Haiti in 1920.

LOBB, JOHN. "Caste and Class in Haiti." *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1, 23–34, July, 1940. A good general analysis [illegible] the élite-Noir dichotomy in modern Haiti.

LOGAN, RAYFORD W. "Education in Haiti." *Journal of Negro History*, XV, 401–460, 1930. Good.

LOPEZ, G. *Considérations sur la société haïtienne de 1804 à 1866*. Port-au-Prince, 1867. Superficial.

MACAULAY, ZACHARY. *Haïti, ou renseignemens authentiques sur l'abolition de l'esclavage et ses résultats à Saint-Domingue et à Guadeloupe*. ("*Avec des détails sur l'état actuel d'Haïti et des noirs émancipés qui forment sa population.*") *Traduit de l'Anglais*. Paris, 1835. Very disappointing. Mostly an attack on the authenticity of the report by Mackenzie of affairs in Haiti. The book includes a 139-page letter series from a Jamaican mulatto visitor to Haiti, who fulsomely praised the country, but said nothing of significance.

MACCORKLE, W. A. *The Monroe Doctrine in Its Relation to the Republic of Haiti*. New York, 1915.

MACKENZIE, CHARLES. *Notes on Hayti, Made during a Residence in That Republic*. London, 1830. 2 vols. A careful, detailed, and often adversely critical survey of Haiti by the British Minister during the first years of Boyer's administration.

MAGLOIRE, AUGUSTE. *Étude sur le tempérament haïtien*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Wryly humorous criticism by a Haitian.

——— *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau basé sur l'observation des faits (1804–1909)*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. 4 vols. Occasionally astute in comment, but adding little to already existing knowledge.

——— *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Haiti puts her trust too much in political, and not enough in economic, reform.

MARCELIN, FRÉDÉRIC. *Choses haïtiennes*. Paris, 1896. Unimportant observations on the Haiti of 1895.

——— *L'Haleine du centenaire*. Paris, 1901. After nearly a century of independence, much is wrong with Haiti.

——— *Le Passé*. Paris, 1902. Nostalgic.

——— *Questions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1891.

——— *Une Évolution nécessaire*. Paris, 1898. Some of the reforms needed by Haiti.

MARCELIN, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *Haïti: ses guerres civiles, leurs causes, leurs conséquences présentes, leur conséquence future et finale*. Paris, 1892. An excellent survey of the first nine decades of revolution in Haiti; of no importance when the author looks into the future.

MILLSPAUGH, ARTHUR C. *Haiti under American Control, 1915–30*. Boston, 1931. A careful analysis of the causes of the Occupation and of the results for Haiti.

——— "Our Haitian problem." *Foreign Affairs*, VII, 556–570, 1929.

MONTAGUE, LUDWELL LEE. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*. Durham, 1940. Required reading for an understanding of the course of Haitian-American relations. Although the emphasis is placed upon diplomatic affairs, the author has a rare understanding of the culture of the Haitian people.

MORPEAU, LOUIS. *Anthologie d'un siècle de poésie haïtienne, 1817–1925.* Paris, 1925. Indispensable for the student of Haitian literature. 113

—— "Un Dominion intellectuel français." *Revue de l'Amérique latine,* VIII, No. 24, 332–341, October, 1924. A good sketch of Haitian literary history. 114

NILES, [MRS.] BLAIR. *Black Haiti.* New York, 1926. This, without professing to be a scholarly treatise, gives many excellent descriptions of Haitian life.

OULIÉ, MARTHE. *Les Antilles, filles de France.* Paris, 1935. A travelogue with a moral: the less American influence exerted upon the French-speaking Antilles, the better for them, especially Haiti.

PARET, TIMOTHÉE. *Dans la mêlée.* Paris, 1932.

PARSONS, ELSIE CLEWS. *The Spirit Cult in Hayti.* Paris, 1928. Good.

PARSONS, ROBERT P. *History of Haitian Medicine.* New York, 1930. The only existing book of its sort. Haiti's medical history has not been long or illustrious; Dr. Parsons discusses the diseases of the country.

PAUL, EDMOND. *Les Causes de nos malheurs.* Kingston (Jamaica), 1882. One of the more penetrating criticisms of conditions in Haiti during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

—— *Questions politico-économiques.* Paris, 1861–63. 3 vols.

PAULTRE, ÉMILE. *Essai sur M. Price-Mars.* Port-au-Prince, 1933. A brief biography and appreciation of one of Haiti's leading modern savants.

PIERRE-LOUIS, DAMASE. *Les Mensonges de notre démocratie.* Paris, 1933.

PRESSOIR, CHARLES F. *Au Rythme des coumbites.* Port-au-Prince, 1933. A small collection of poems, mostly about native life.

—— *La Médecine en Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1927. Cursory.

—— "Pages de géographie économique." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* vol. III, No. 6, April, 1932.

PREVOST, JULIEN (Comte de LIMONADE). *Relation des glorieux événemens qui ont porté leurs Majestés Royales sur le trône d'Hayti.* Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), 1811. Chiefly an account of the conflict between Christophe and Pétion, with a fulsome panegyric of the former.

PRICE, HANNIBAL. *De la Réhabilitation de la race Noire par la république d'Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1900. Superficial.

—— *The Haytian Question.* New York, 1891. The then Haitian Minister to the United States comments upon the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

PRICE-MARS, DR. [JEAN]. *Ainsi parla l'oncle . . . Essais d'ethnographie.* Port-au-Prince, 1928. An indispensable book on Haitian life and belief by one of the country's leading historians, ethnographers, sociologists. The author not only has the confidence of the people among whom he does research, but also the intellectual equipment to write brilliantly about what he observes.

—— *La Vocation de l'élite.* Port-au-Prince, 1919. Written by one of the intellectual élite, this book is a devastating criticism of the futility on the part of the élite in condemning their African heritage, and of the refusal of the élite to participate constructively in the life of the country.

—— *Une Étape de l'évolution haïtienne.* Port-au-Prince, no date [probably 1930]. A survey of the intellectual and cultural achievements of Haiti.

RAINSFORD, MARCUS. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti.* ("Compre-

1/3 hending a view of the principal transactions in the revolution of Saint Domingo; with its ancient and modern state." Generally titled: *History of St. Domingo.*) •11+ London, 1805. A contemporary but rather superficial account of the period of Toussaint and Dessalines.

Redpath, James. *A Guide to Hayti.* Boston, 1861. Interesting and moderately informative, concerning the Haiti of Soulouque and Geffrard.

Renaud, Raymond. *Le Régime foncier en Haïti.* Paris, 1934. The best monograph on the modern property systems in Haiti, based upon careful personal research.

Ritter, Karl. *Naturhistorische Reise nach der West Indischen Insel Hayti.* ("*Auf Kosten Sr. Majestät des Kaisers von Oesterreich.*") Stuttgard (Stuttgart), 1836. By the "Garteninspector in Ungarn und Mitglied mehrerer gelehrten Gesellschaften." Ritter's journey was taken in the time of Christophe, ending in 1820. Full of acute observations about the kingdom. An excellent source.

Rosemond, Jules. *La Crise morale et civique.* Port-au-Prince, 1915. Merely another of the spate of books analyzing the crisis which led to the American Occupation.

St. John, Sir Spenser. *Hayti, or the Black Republic.* 2d ed. London, 1889. (1st ed., London, 1884.) The British Minister to Haiti was an acute observer, with a good literary style; but he had a profound antipathy to the country and its ways. The purpose of his book is to show the general decline of Haiti during the nineteenth century, and to prove the existence of cannibalism as an essential part of "Vaudoux." Biting, sarcastic criticism.

Saint-Rémy [des Cayes, Haiti; no given name]. *Pétion et Haïti: essai monographique et historique.* Paris, 1854-57. 5 vols. This mulatto author of Les Cayes is not to be mistaken for the Frenchman, R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy (*q.v.*). The work is really a history of Haiti, following Madiou (*q.v.*) closely, but decidedly adulatory of Pétion. Many digressions to moralize at length. A sixth volume was planned, to analyze the work of Pétion between 1811 and 1818, but it was not achieved.

Sannon, H. Pauléus. *Essai historique sur la révolution de 1843.* Aux Cayes, 1905. One of the better accounts of the events leading up to the revolution which displaced Boyer.

[Saunders, Prince.] *By Authority: Haytian Papers.* London, 1816. The high lights of Christophe's reign, told by the King's official toady, and designed to extol Christophe to the British, whom Christophe admired. Of little value.

Schoelcher, V. *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise.* Paris, 1842. 2 vols. Occasionally informative about the Haiti of Boyer.

Seabrook, W. B. *The Magic Island.* New York, 1929. An overwrought account of presumably personal experiences. When the author is not intent upon being dramatic, he is an acute observer. Valuable appendices. This book has been the cause of much resentment and of bitter replies by modern Haitians.

Séjourné, Georges. "Établissement de la propriété et de la famille au lendemain de l'indépendance." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* VI, No. 17, 9-22, January, 1935.

Simpson, George E. "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti." *American Anthropologist,* n.s. XLII, No. 2, 236-254. An ethnographical study.

Streit, Clarence. "Haiti: Intervention in Operation," *Foreign Affairs,* VI, 615-632, 1928.

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SYLVAIN, GEORGES. *Cric? Crac!* ("Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles.") 2d ed. Port-au-Prince, 1929. A charming collection of fables in Créole.

SYLVAIN, SUZANNE. *Le Créole haïtien: morphologie et syntaxe.* Wetteren (Belgium), 1936. A scholarly treatise on the folk language.

SYLVAIN, SUZANNE COMHAIRE-. *Les Contes haïtiens.* Wetteren (Belgium), 1937. 2 vols. A collection of Créole tales, with critical comments upon their origin and their relation to stories told in other parts of the world by Negroes.

TAFT, EDNA. *A Puritan in Voodoo-Land.* Philadelphia, 1938. A superficial travelogue.

THOBY, ARMAND, *La Question agraire en Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1888. One of the best early accounts of the property situation since the time of Pétion.

THOMPSON, WALLACE. "Climatic Influences in the Caribbean." *Current History,* February, 1930. Entirely superficial.

THORPE, GEORGE C. "American Achievements in Santo Domingo, Haiti, and the Virgin Islands." *Journal of International Relations,* XI, 63–86, 1920.

TIPPENHAUER, GENTIL. *Die Insel Haiti.* Leipzig, 1893.

VAVAL, DURACINÉ. "Alexandre Pétion: l'homme et sa vie." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* III, No. 7, July, 1932.

——— *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne, ou l'âme noire.* Port-au-Prince, 1933. A compendium of information, with unimportant criticisms.

——— *Histoire financière et économique d'Haïti de l'indépendance à nos jours.* Port-au-Prince, 1934. Useful.

——— "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* II, No. 3, June, 1931. Good analysis of the statecraft of Christophe.

[VIELLOT and LABORDÈRE (Anon.).] *De la Gérontocratie en Haïti.* Paris, 1860. A sound set of observations about the failure of young men to rise to leadership in mid-century Haiti.

WEATHERFORD, W. D. *The Negro from Africa to America.* New York, 1924. Superficial.

WILGUS, A. CURTIS, ed. *The Caribbean Area.* Washington, 1934. With a fairly good short analysis of the Haitian situation.

WILLIAMS, MARY WILHELMINE. *The People and Politics of Latin America.* Boston, 1930. A good chapter on the history of Haiti.

WIRKUS, FAUSTIN, and DUDLEY, TANEY. *The White King of La Gonâve.* New York, 1931. An American Marine's account of his experiences in charge of the island lying off Port-au-Prince.

NOVELS, AND OTHER WORKS OF THE IMAGINATION

BEDFORD-JONES, H. *Drums of Dambala.* New York, 1933.

CASSÉUS, MAURICE. *Viejo.* Port-au-Prince, 1935. An excellent novel, dealing with a Haitian who tried to find work in Cuba. Illuminating side lights on folkways and mores; many conversations in Créole.

CHAMBERLAIN, GEORGE A. *The Silver Cord.* New York, 1927.

CRAIGE, JOHN H. *Black Bagdad.* New York, 1933.

——— *Cannibal Cousins.* New York, 1934.

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113 Davis, Beale. *The Goat without Horns.* New York, 1925. Voodoo.

● 114 Endore, Guy. *Babouk.* New York, 1935. The scene is in colonial Saint-Domingue.

Firbank, Ronald. *Prancing Nigger.* New York, 1926.

Loederer, Richard A. *Voodoo Fire in Haiti.* New York, 1935.

Martineau, Harriet. *The Hour and the Man.* London, 1841. Toussaint.

Prichard, Hesketh. *Where Black Rules White.* Westminster, 1900.

Roscoe, Theodore. *Murder on the Way!* New York, 1935.

Taylor, J. Gibson. *Dark Dawn.* New York, 1932.

Vandercook, John W. *Black Majesty.* New York, 1928. A vivid picture of Christophe.

Waugh, Alec. *No Quarter.* London, 1933. Tortuga and Saint-Domingue.

Waxman, Percy. *The Black Napoleon.* New York, 1931.

Williams, Joseph J. *Voodoos and Obeahs.* New York, 1932. Professes to be a scholarly treatise.

Wilson, Adelaide. *First Women.* New York, 1933.

NOTE: This list is by no means complete; it merely gives a fair sample of the works of imagination whose scene is laid in Haiti, early or modern.

NOTE: *The author regards the following* works as the outstanding and indispensable ones for an understanding of Haiti:

L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue.*
J. Brown. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo.* (1837).
H. P. Davis. *Black Democracy; the Story of Haiti.*
J. C. Dorsainvil. *Manuel d'histoire d'Haiti.*
Melville J. Herskovits. *Life in a Haitian Valley.*
Ludwell L. Montague. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938.*
Dr. J. Price-Mars. *Ainsi parla l'oncle.*

See the Bibliography for a detailed description of each.